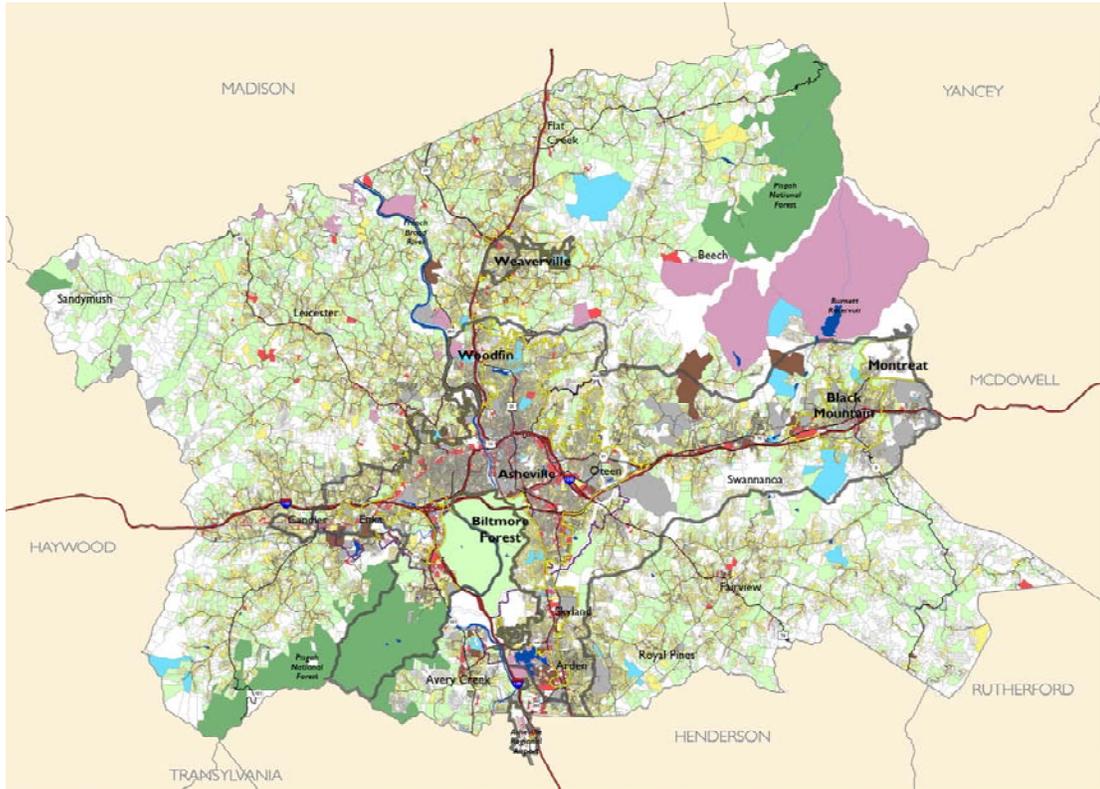


Buncombe County

Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update



June 21, 2006

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Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update

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I. INTRODUCTION

Buncombe County has gone through a dramatic series of changes since the 1998 Comprehensive Land Use Plan (1998 Plan) was adopted in 1999. From residential growth to industrial and manufacturing decline, this decade's market place has aggressively reshaped the County over the past 10 years. Residential development is booming, as Buncombe County is increasingly a highly desirable place to live and work. A strong housing market has attracted new residents from around the region and the Country. Marketed as a place for active retirees, Buncombe County is also experiencing a dramatic growth increase within the second home market designed specifically for the rush of baby boomer retirees and this residential growth has triggered a demand for services and has created development pressure that is affecting a number of conditions, including the natural environment.

The recent changes have prompted Buncombe County officials to address various current issues through an update of the 1998 Plan. This update comes at a critical time to help guide future land use decisions based on pressures that are expected to continue to rise over the next 10 years. Managing growth in a manner that is mindful of current economic initiatives, environmental sensitivity, capacity to provide needed infrastructure, and concern for Buncombe County's natural and cultural resources is a difficult challenge, but one which needs to be addressed in an expedited manner. New strategies and tools are needed to guide the County over the next few decades in order to retain and enhance the quality of life within the Buncombe County.

The primary purpose of the update is to bring forward specific land use recommendations, particularly for the urbanizing areas within the County's jurisdiction, and identify a broad range of strategies aimed at achieving the more detailed, updated plan.

The four-month process included regular meetings with the Planning Board, stakeholder interviews designed to clarify issues identified by the Planning Board, and two public meetings (see Appendix A for lists of Planning Board members and stakeholders).

The overall goals of the 1998 Plan, which have changed very little, if at all, over the last eight years, included the following:

- ***Establish a Land Use Plan that serves as a foundation for continued land planning and future development.***
- ***Develop a strategic approach to coordinated infrastructure development, land development and resource conservation.***
- ***Mobilize the community through a consensus building process to gain critical input and agreement on the plan.***
- ***Represent Buncombe County government positively to the community***
- ***Provide an enhanced database for the long term management and analysis of land use.***
- ***Identify and conserve critical environmental resources.***
- ***Build understanding of importance of land use planning among citizens and owners.***

II. ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES ADDRESSED BY THE 1998 COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN

The issues and opportunities addressed in the 1998 plan are as follows:

- Regard for natural beauty in the county, emphasis on parks and recreation.
- Concern for means to implement comprehensive plan initiatives
- Pro and con on mobile homes – possible stricter ordinance
- Support for no growth or growth management
- “If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.”
- Too much emphasis on tourism re: quality of jobs
- Protect French Broad River
- Protection of Property Rights
- Zoning or excessive regulation
- Annexation by Asheville or other municipalities
- Asphalt Plant
- Expansion of extra-territorial jurisdiction of Asheville or other municipalities
- Mobile homes/Affordable Housing
- Uncontrolled Growth
- Newcomers vs. Old-timers

They revolve around three general areas of concern: economic development, infrastructure, and the environment. These issues set the course for the 1998 Comprehensive Land Use Plan. In response to the issues identified, the 1998 Plan presented a trend line scenario as well as three alternatives for effectively managing land use within the County based on infrastructure, environmental, and economic objectives.

1. **Continue existing trends:** Continue current land use trends which perpetuate a broad mix of existing land uses in an undifferentiated pattern.
2. **Enhance Environmental Qualities:** Future development to be guided by the preservation of existing natural and scenic areas including mountain slopes, ridge lines, rivers and federal lands, etc. This alternative reduces conflict between urban development and the natural environment.
3. **Transportation/Infrastructure Pattern:** Concentrate high traffic generating commercial, industrial and multi-family residential development along major corridors where the availability of water sewer and transportation can be easily managed.
4. **Strengthen Economic Development:** Create accessible commercial concentrations in a “corridors and centers” concept by establishing economic use categories and determining where commercial hubs could most feasibly be developed.

III. PROGRESS ON 1998 COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Progress has been made on the specific recommendations highlighted in the 1998 Plan. Some recommendations have been completed, some are ongoing, and others have not yet been implemented. The following summary indicates the accomplishments pertaining to the recommendations set forth in the 1998 Plan. (See Appendix B for the Summary of Land Use Plan Status Report prepared by County Staff in 2005.)

Completed Action Steps

- Encouraged design standards which limit driveway access, curb cuts, median crossings
- Strengthen design standards of Manufacture Housing Ordinance (MHP)
- Decreased existing density requirements for MHPs with septic and wells
- Developed a mechanism to fund and purchase or accept transfers of conservation easements

On-Going Action Steps

- Direct development growth by addressing existing and new state road development.
- Identify funding strategies for future expansions.
- Establish mechanisms that encourage and support a more regional approach to sewer services.
- Concentrate future development along existing sewer lines.
- Prioritize water and sewer expansions to support the LUP.
- Plan future recreational facilities around school sites.
- Balance availability of recreational facilities by existing school sites.
- Establish regionalized economic development approach to water/sewer lines.
- Coordinate industrial development with other counties resulting in shared tax /revenue base.
- Encourage voluntary buffering along stream and river corridors.
- Emphasize benefits of water resource protection for natural wildlife.
- Aggressively enforce regulations prohibiting straight piping and improper discharge.
- Develop incentives and standards for quality industrial siting which can include waiving impact fees and MSD charges.
- Urge schools to follow LUP in siting of future facilities and tie such adherence to County budget funding requests.

Pending Action Steps

- Reduce traffic congestion by utilizing frontage roads or cross-parcel road connections.
- Establish Park and Ride lots.
- Encourage alternative forms of transportation.
- Identify funding strategies for future recreational facilities.
- Develop public and private partnerships for expansion and development of recreational facilities.
- Limit public water and sewer to elevations no greater than 2,500 ft and 40% slope.
- In cooperation with Farmland Preservation Program and Soil and Water Conservation District, create Rural Lands Preservation Trust.
- Establish ongoing funding plan for purchases by the Trust.
- In Owen and Reynolds districts, provide parkway viewshed protection through the voluntary conveyance and purchase of scenic easements.
- Waive water/sewer impact fees for affordable housing that meets specific criteria.
- Use incentives to accomplish greenbelts, rural protection areas and viewsheds.

Not Completed Action Steps

- Direct water and sewer service toward areas of high environmental impact.
- Limit new or additional utility taps where feasible on prime farmlands.
- Provide for incentives that encourage the recycling of existing industrial sites.
- Create limited zoning regulation for specifically identified areas to protect industrial properties.
- Focus commercial development toward hubs, not toward extensive strip development along connectors and corridors.

IV. CURRENT ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

The following summarizes the issues and opportunities as identified by the Planning Board and confirmed by key stakeholders interviewed early in the process. Issues and opportunities are categorized using the following six topics: General Direction of Growth and Development, Land Use, Environment, Infrastructure/Transportation/Community Facilities, Economic Development, and Communication.

A. General Direction of Growth & Development

Population Growth

The population growth in Buncombe County has remained at a relatively constant rate over the last 10 years and is projected to continue at a similar pace for the next 25 years. Steady full-time population gains are expected to yield approximately 2,500 new residents per year. The 1998 population was estimated at 201,405 and the 2000 census reported a population of 206,209. In the year 2010, the population growth will exceed 230,000. The following is a chart that highlights growth by decade and projected growth for the next 25 years.

County Growth Population Projections

Year	Population	Population Growth	% Growth	Persons Per Sq. Mile
1980	160,897	-		245
1990	174,357	13,924	8.6	265
2000	206,289	31,932	18.3	314
2010	230,803	24,514	11.9	351
2020	258,650	27,825	12.0	393
2030	285,370	26,108	10.3	434

Source - <http://demog.state.nc.us/>

Buncombe County is among the top counties in NC in total population and based on projected growth, it is expected to remain among the top 10 most populated counties in the state. It is projected the County will remain ranked approximately 8th in total population in the state between now and 2030.

Top 10 Counties – Projected Populations

	April 2010	April 2020	April 2030
North Carolina	9,315,141	10,682,217	12,067,013
1. Wake	859,649	1,106,218	1,367,176
2. Mecklenburg	880,879	1,082,890	1,296,741
3. Guilford	466,941	527,134	588,886
4. Forsyth	343,703	384,684	427,292
5. Cumberland	324,385	349,192	371,446
6. Durham	260,010	297,461	336,179
7. Union	184,590	242,652	306,210
8. Buncombe	230,803	258,650	285,370
9. Johnston	168,481	217,764	271,075
10. New Hanover	194,509	227,827	259,096

Source - <http://demog.state.nc.us/>

Location of Development

In the past few years, new development has occurred throughout the entire county. New residential development has taken hold both within and outside of the Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) boundary, and it is occurring on lands that were previously thought to be undeveloped.

IV. CURRENT ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

More frequently, such development is being located on land that lies above 2,500 feet in elevation and exceeds slopes of 40%, thereby impacting sensitive environmental areas. The scattering of new residential development in highly visible locations is presenting a threat to the quality of the scenic environment throughout the county.

Quality of Development

Concern for the quality of development has been expressed, and such concerns range from the type and use of building materials to the approach to site design and development appearance.

Quality of Life – Changes Resulting in Different Perception of Quality of Life

Buncombe County has changed over the past eight years and will continue to change as pressures due to growth and development continue. It is important to understand that the quality of life issues need to be balanced with growth and economic development opportunities. As noted in the 1998 Plan, quality of life is the primary attraction for new residents and helps to retain existing residents. If unmanaged, the growth the county is experiencing could have an impact on the features that define the quality of life in the county.

B. Land Use

A variety of land use changes have occurred since the 1998 Plan was adopted (see Existing Land Use Map # 1). Most evident is the conversion of vacant and agricultural land to residential subdivisions. The vision for concentrated development in commercial hubs and industrial development in designated areas has not been realized. The following section highlights the current issues the County is facing, particularly new issues that have arisen in the last eight years.

Imbalance of Residential and Non-Residential Development

During the past eight years, land use has changed throughout Buncombe County. Most new development is residential, as the demand for residential development has increased. There is a lack of momentum for large-scale industrial development and manufacturing in the County. Therefore, land suitable for commercial and industrial development has not been developed for such uses. Sites previously designated for industrial development have been gradually changing into residential. Residential home prices are commanding a premium in the current market, putting additional pressure on landowners to sell to residential developers in advance of attracting industrial employers to the same land.

From the year 2002, Buncombe County has experienced a 48% jump in residential building permits issued, with the most significant influx occurring just last year with 1547 residential permits (see Building Permit Map # 2). With an average estimated full time population yearly increase of approximately 2,500 residents a year and an average household size of 2.33 (Census 2000), it can be estimated that approximately 944 of the 1547 residential permits issued in 2005 were built for full-time residents with the remaining 603 units built for non-residents as second homes.

2002-05 Single Family Residential Building Permit Activity

Date	Single Family	% Difference	Total Value	Permit Value
Dec 2005	1547	19%	\$337,850,465	\$218,390
Dec 2004	1298	10%	\$251,261,377	\$193,575
Dec 2003	1179	12.8%	\$202,926,760	\$172,117
Dec 2002	1045	-	\$182,610,909	\$174,747

IV. CURRENT ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

Lack of Residential Housing Choices

In urbanizing areas across the US, there are numerous housing options for every lifestyle. Nationally, there has been a shift in home choices based on our aging population, which is demanding single level living and downsizing from traditional single family homes. Condos and patio style homes are in high demand and will continue to rise as the baby boomer generation heads into retirement. Condos, town homes, and lofts for young urban workers are more desirable than single family homes. In Buncombe County, the housing market reflects these trends, but the primary demand is for single family homes.

A surge in residential development has occurred due to the change in the single family housing market over the last five years. Demand is driving home prices up. According to the North Carolina Association of Realtors, the average 2005 year-to-date selling price of homes in the Asheville metropolitan statistical area (MSA) was approximately \$253,926, a 14.5% increase from the 2004 average selling price of \$222,656 and a 37.8% gain over the last five years.

Housing Appreciation Rates (2005 -1st Quarter)

Residential Appreciation (1Q 2005)	1-Year	5-Year
Asheville Metro	9.0%	37.8%
North Carolina	6.0%	24.7%
United States	12.5%	50.5%

Because of the demand and increases in property values, single family homes are being built in all areas of the county, including areas that were once considered unbuildable due to various environmental conditions and the difficulty of extending services to these areas. Previously cited in the 1998 Plan, "In the mountainous areas, it is common for terrain slope in excess of 20% up to 50%. These areas are practically impossible for building except for very small scale development such as individual homes on very large acreage."

Today, property values are justifying the costs of improvements. For example, land outside of the MSD boundary has begun to develop for residential uses despite the lack of access to sewer services, as developers can easily recapture the costs associated with extending lines and providing private utility systems. An increase in planned, multi-lot developments in steep slope areas of 25% and greater, not just single estate homes, is also more common. Home builders are commanding a high market value for the scenic offerings previously thought to be unobtainable. This trend is expected to continue as long as Buncombe County remains in a prosperous market for residential development.

Overall, achieving a mix of housing types that is attractive and affordable to a diversity of ages, incomes, and household types and sizes is critical for future growth and development within the County.

Loss of Agricultural Land

The loss of farmland was a highlighted issue in the 1998 Plan and a basis for the volunteer Farmland Preservation Program currently sponsored by the County. The volunteer Farmland Preservation Program, in conjunction with the Conservation Agreement Program, is an attempt to preserve large tracts of prime farmland from development. Even with this program, the County is still experiencing a reduction of agricultural land. Large scale subdivisions and commercial development are being planned and developed on existing agricultural lands that are not protected by the Farmland Preservation Program.

IV. CURRENT ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

Locally Undesirable Land Use

Undesirable uses also known as LULUs (Locally Undesirable Land Use) include asphalt plants, landfills, etc. But, sites must be identified as these uses are needed. Even though the County has ordinances in place that control site design and specific features of each development to minimize the negative impacts, there is still a great deal of resistance to locating these uses in the County.

C. Environment

From fertile farmland to scenic mountain tops, Buncombe County has a wealth of important, valuable natural resources. These environmental qualities helped to shape some of the recommendations in the 1998 Plan and protection of such resources is still a major concern today (see Natural Features Map # 3).

Development on Steep Slopes and Ridgelines

The demand for high-end housing at higher elevations and along scenic ridgelines has produced a wide array of environmental and scenic impacts. In the 1998 Plan, recommendations were crafted to discourage development on land in critical viewsheds, land above 2,500 feet in elevation, and land exceeding 40% slopes (see Slope Map # 4). Now, these areas are currently in play for development and new tools must be developed to further protect the scenic quality of the ridgelines and visible mountain sides and hillsides. In addition to interrupting scenic views, such development can lead to environmental problems. Development on steep slopes calls for special construction techniques and slope stabilization methods (including post-construction), and the constant threat of increased erosion from stormwater runoff compromise the integrity of the slopes and the structures built there. The rate and density of development only exacerbates the problem, so phasing is also an issue.

Hazard Areas

The State of North Carolina has identified areas within Buncombe County as potential hazard areas for landslides. As more housing is built in areas potentially prone to landslides, the chance for natural landslide disasters will increase. The State will be developing a detailed study regarding landslide hazards in Buncombe County beginning in 2007.

Water Quality

Insensitive hillside development is an ongoing threat to water quality throughout the County. The 1998 Plan encouraged volunteer buffering incentives for stream and river corridors. This, along with proposed enforcement of regulations controlling illegal discharging into streams and rivers, were major recommendations to help protect the County's water resources.

Flooding

With the addition of impervious surfaces, the opportunity for flooding could increase within certain valleys. Recent storm events have prompted studies to determine ways to effectively address flooding, and improvements to stormwater management techniques (i.e., requirements for pipe size increases) are being examined.

Open Space Preservation

There is a desire to protect more undeveloped land in the county for open space purposes (protection of environmentally sensitive areas, scenic areas, wildlife habitats, etc.); though such open space might not be publicly accessible. This issue remains relevant today, as more open

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space land is being developed, especially outside of the MSD boundary (see Undeveloped Land Map #5 A, B, and C).

Approximately 50,202 acres of the total ±420,000 acres (about 12% of the total land mass) within the county are conservation lands, but more land is being targeted. Attributes for potential conservation lands have recently been identified:

- Large parcels over 100 acres
- Ridgetops and highlands
- Parcels adjacent to already protected areas
- Ecologically sensitive areas

The 1998 Plan identified conservation easements as a tool for land protection. Lack of awareness of the benefits of conservation easements is one obstacle to widespread use of this tool. As more landowners look toward conservation options, access to detailed and easily understood information is needed.

D. Infrastructure /Transportation/ Community Facilities

Water, sewer, roads, and community facilities are vital components, and the ability to provide facilities and services at a rate that keeps pace with growth—and the resulting demand—directly affects the quality of life within the County. The following section highlights various issues from the 1998 Plan and how those issues have changed over time as well as a few new issues that have arisen since the previous plan effort.

The Transportation Network and Traffic Congestion

Traffic congestion is becoming an issue, but it is not yet perceived to be a major issue. Most of the congestion along the roadways in Buncombe County is within the urbanizing areas of the county. Certain road segments are showing increases in average daily traffic rates since the completion of the 1998 Plan (see Transportation Map# 6).

Commuting patterns have changed in Buncombe County over the past eight years. With the increased housing costs and the rise in the tourism, hospitality and service sectors, more people are commuting into Buncombe County from neighboring counties for work, and inter-county commuting is estimated to increase in the near future. The following tables indicate an increase in commutes from neighboring counties based on Census 2000 data.

1990 Number of Workers Commuting to Buncombe County

Henderson County	4,374
Haywood County	3,485
Madison County	3,241

2000 Number of Workers Commuting to Buncombe County

Henderson County	6,775
Haywood County	4,096
Madison County	3,986

Buncombe County has an extensive highway system with three interstate highway components, including I-26, I-40, and I-240. The interstate highways provide opportunities for relatively efficient regional mobility. In addition to the interstate system, US highways (19/23, 25, 25A, 70, 74, and 74-A) and state routes radiate out from the City of Asheville providing local access to communities and towns within the county. The North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 13 oversees the County area and has implemented a variety of improvements in the County. Below is a list of transportation improvements that are scheduled to take place in the next 25 years. (Source: French Broad River MPO –Transportation 2030 Long Range Plan)

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Proposed Transportation Projects 2006-2010

- I-40 adding lanes from I-26 to Enka/Candler (exit 44)
- Long Shoals Road Sections B and C and new interchange
- NC 191 Widening I-26 to I-40 (Farmer's Market)
- Leicester Highway Widening
- US 19/23 Widening – Candler to Canton
- I-240 Merrimon Avenue Interchange

Proposed Transportation Projects 2011-2020

- I-26 Connector (Non trust fund portion)
- US 19/23 Widening – Candler to Canton
- 25A Sweeten Creek Widening A Section
- I-40 Black Mountain Interchange
- I-40 Liberty Road Interchange
- I-26 Widening
- US 25 Merrimon Ave – Division Project
- Wilma Dykeman Riverway – Major Upgrade
- I-26 Connector - Asheville

Proposed Transportation Projects 2021-2030

- US 19/23 Asheville to Madison Widen and Upgrade
- Long Shoals Widening – A Section I-26 to NC 191
- NC 191 Widening – Arboretum to NC 280
- NC 112 Sand Hill Sardis Road Widening
- US 25 Weaverville Highway in Woodfin – Upgrade
- Black Mountain Southeast Connector
- Beaverdam Road Upgrade
- Reems Creek Road South Main Street Intersection
- North Woodfin Avenue Upgrade
- Clark Chapel Road – Upgrade

Traditional traffic improvements have always included the construction of new roadway facilities and various types of road widening efforts. However, the topography of the county limits the use of these traditional approaches as solutions to future congestion problems. Access management is and will continue to be key to maintaining and enhancing mobility in the area, and the MPO continues to work with NCDOT and developers to employ access management techniques. As a relatively new issue, alternative methods to road widening may be suggested to reduce the impacts on the existing and future built environment. As the County continues to grow, the MPO will consider multi-modal transportation solutions that include public transit opportunities and walking and bicycling initiatives.

Water & Sewer Service

The Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) was created to effectively manage and distribute the expansion of the water and sewer system in the County. The Asheville Regional Water Authority was created to distribute water to both City and select County areas. The potential for new growth and development relies heavily on the location of future water and sewer service areas. These issues remain a relevant topic today and the following section summarizes past and present issues (see Water and Sewer Service Area Map #7).

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Water & Sewer Corridor Location

Identifying areas for future water and sewer expansion was a 1998 issue that is still relevant today. The previous plan called for the concentration of development along existing corridors already serviced by water and sewer to take advantage of existing capacity.

Water & Sewer - Privately Funded Systems / Extensions

A new issue that has arisen in the past few years is the potential for privately funded water and sewer service. As land values rise, costs for providing services are justified from the developer perspective. Developers are opting to pay for private systems, or where feasible pay to construct line extension from the existing systems, to serve a development.

Water Treatment Capacity

The steady decline of large scale manufacturing and industrial sites has created an overabundance of water supply. Some of the major buyers for water were large manufacturing industries which needed large quantities of water for various production efforts. With the reduction in industrial and manufacturing markets, public water supplies are readily available for future growth and development within the current service area.

Water - Need for an Independent Authority or Regional Approach

There is an expressed need for an independent water authority, a concept that was discussed in 1998 and is currently a topic of discussion today. The ability to provide water service on a regional scale would help to direct growth within the County and within local participating jurisdictions. The current debate about water service control and water service rates for both County and City residents will continue to have an impact on growth and development in the short term.

Wells - Quantity, Low-Producing, Groundwater Contamination

As development increases outside of the current water service areas, additional wells are being drilled to serve development in non-service areas. Current regulations control placement of wells, but density in a given area and testing are not considered as new wells are drilled. Drilling numerous wells in a concentrated area could have an impact on local aquifers, particularly during periods of drought. For many of the older existing wells within the county that were not properly installed, there is increased potential for ground water contamination.

Sewer Treatment Capacity

According to MSD Master Plan, the MSD owns, operates and maintains a 40 million gallon per day wastewater treatment plant to treat raw sewage and industrial wastewaters collected in an extensive network (approximately 750 miles) of collector sewer lines and 17 pump stations currently owned, operated and maintained by MSD. The MSD also owns, operates and maintains approximately 60 miles of interceptor sewer lines that connect the system to the treatment plant. Within its current service area boundary, the MSD expects to have enough sewer treatment capacity for future growth and development.

Sewer – Improvements and MSD Expansion

The MSD is currently conducting various rehabilitation efforts for the existing sewer system. The MSD recognizes that its sewer system is aging and an aggressive capital improvement plan is in place to tackle specific rehabilitation efforts. The MSD cites that most of the collection system is old and subject to significant infiltration/inflow which has been estimated to be similar to the water consumption during dry weather but approximately 800-percent of the billable flow during storm events.

The MSD is planning for future expansion and capacity for next twenty years. According to the MSD, the collection system is currently being extended by 600-700 new connections per year.

IV. CURRENT ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

Septic - Failures

With the widespread residential development occurring outside of the MSD boundary, septic impacts are continuing to be an ongoing issue. Cited previously in 1998 as a concern primarily as it pertained to high density mobile home development, the current issue today is the potential for septic field impacts with regard to adequate spacing and placement of the system, and groundwater contamination. Currently there are known septic failures in the following areas: Turnberry Subdivision, Mills Gap and the Weston Road Area. As septic fields are built on smaller lots and closer together, the potential for drinking water contamination increases. Steep slope soils may not be suitable for appropriate septic field drainage.

Power - Overserved Areas

Recent improvements to local power supplies have been provided around potential industrial sites identified in the 1998 Plan, but due to a recent market shift resulting in increased residential development, previously earmarked industrial sites are slipping into residential uses. These areas are now being over-served with excess power that will not be utilized for the heavy industrial and manufacturing functions it was intended to serve. Progress Energy is unable to generate users to justify the supply.

Community Facilities - Education, and School Growth

Buncombe County is home to a wide variety of educational institutions and facilities. Currently the County is home to 5 colleges and universities, 23 elementary schools, 7 middle schools, 6 high schools, and 3 special program schools (see Community Facilities Map # 8).

Buncombe County Public School System Attendance & Employment - 2005

23 Elementary Schools
7 Middle Schools
6 High Schools
3 Special Program Schools

Student Enrollment 25,570
Teachers/Professional 1,930

Source: Asheville Business Research Center 2005

Currently, the school system in Buncombe County is divided into two distinct systems: the City of Asheville School District and the Buncombe County School District. Coordination issues for both districts will become significant as the County's population grows and potential future schools sites are proposed over the next twenty years. Reserving sites for future facilities in suitable locations may be challenging, particularly as land values continue to rise.

Buncombe County Schools are experiencing some growth within certain schools with in the County. Today, extreme overcrowding is not a major issue in the County or the City. Public school population has not increased dramatically over the past 8 years. Total population for Buncombe County Schools in 1997 was 24,679 as compared to 25,570 in 2005. According to the Projected Enrollments & Facility Needs Report created by the Buncombe County School District, the following schools are projected to experience some overcrowding in the near future. Capital improvement plans are in place to build additional space to accommodate future student enrollment.

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Rank	School Capacity	Highest Projection	Overage
1 T.C. Roberson HS	1315	1786	471
2 C.A. Erwin HS	1170	1520	351
3 Valley Springs MS	766	1042	276
4 Enka HS	1290	1479	189
5 N. Buncombe HS	1090	1284	184
6 Hominy Valley ES	518	655	137
7 Emma ES	549	646	97
8 C.A. Erwin MS	1035	1121	88
9 Avery's Creek ES	628	716	84
10 West Buncombe ES	720	792	72
11 W.W. Estes ES	852	916	64
12 A.C. Reynolds HS	1615	1643	28

Source: Project Enrollment and Facility Needs, 2004 Buncombe County School District

Colleges and universities in Buncombe County are in a growth mode. Much of current student populations are comprised of students from outside Buncombe County. In fact, only 13% of students attending Warren Wilson College and 60% of students attending Montreat College are from NC. As more students are recruited (both Warren Wilson College and Montreat College have enrollment goals of over 1000 students), additional demands for housing and transportation—for students and employees—can be expected if not provided by the schools.

Buncombe County Colleges and Universities Attendance - 2005

University of North Carolina – Asheville - 3,109
Warren Wilson College - 823
Montreat College - 461
Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College – 6,042
South College - 130

Community Facilities - Recreation Facilities

The County is also home to a number of park and recreation facilities. From river parks and soccer complexes to community pools, Buncombe County offers a range of public recreational facilities and programs. (See Community Facilities Map # 8) Current park and recreation facilities include the following:

- Karpen Soccer Fields
- Ledges Whitewater River Park
- North Buncombe Park
- Walnut Island River Park
- Charles D. Owen Park
- Owen Pool
- Bent Creek River Park
- Cane Creek Pool & Soccer Fields
- Corcoran Paige River Park
- Glen Bridge River Park
- Lake Julian Park
- Zeugner Center
- Skyland Soccer Fields
- Buncombe County Sports Park
- Erwin Community Pool
- Hominy Creek River Park
- Hominy Valley Park

An issue that was present in 1998 and continues to be an issue is the desire for new park and greenway development throughout the County and City. Recent efforts include the City of Asheville's Riverlink plan, which promotes parks, greenways and connections along the French Broad River, and local efforts to conserve additional lands for recreation activities. These ideas are part of a broader concept of linking park and greenway facilities around the county.

IV. CURRENT ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

E. Economic Development

Economic development efforts played a significant role in the formulation of the 1998 Plan. A specific model was formed to address potential economic development areas ranging from industrial and manufacturing areas to commercial hubs. A number of sites suitable for industrial and office parks were identified in 1998. (See Existing and Potential Industrial and Office Map # 9.) But, Buncombe County has gone through a variety of changes affecting economic development since 1998. Over the last few years, the industrial and manufacturing sectors have declined significantly in growth. In 2000, Buncombe County's primary occupations were described as management, professional, and related operations. The health services and tourism are among the industries where the most recent growth has occurred. The current top employers in the county are as follows:

- Mission Health and Hospitals 3,000+
- Buncombe County Public Schools Educational Services 3,000+
- Ingles Markets, Inc. Food & Beverage Stores 1,000-2,999
- Buncombe County General Government 1,000-2,999
- City of Asheville Government 1,000-2,999
- VA Medical Center-Asheville Hospitals 1,000-2,999
- The Biltmore Company Museums, Historical Sites & Similar Institutions 1000-2999
- CarePartners Nursing & Residential Care Facilities 1,000-2,999
- The Grove Park Inn Resort & Spa Accommodation 1,000-2,999
- Sonopress, LLC Computer & Electronic Product Mfg. 500-749
- Asheville City Schools Educational Services 500-749
- Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community
- College (A-B Tech.) Educational Services 500-749
- University of North Carolina at Asheville Educational Services 500-749
- ClientLogic, A Subsidiary of Onex Corp. 500-749
- Advantage Home and Community Care, Inc. 500-749
- Owen Blankets (A Subsidiary of Spring Industries, Inc.) Textile Product Mills 500-749
- Thermo Electron Corporation Machinery Mfg. 500-749
- APAC-Atlantic, Inc. (Asheville Division) Heavy & Civil Engineering Construction 500-749
- MB Haynes Corp. (Division Offices) Construction of Buildings 500-749
- BorgWarner Turbo Systems Transportation Equip. Mfg. 500-749

Source: Asheville Metro Business Research Center

Dropping out of the 1998 plans list of top employers within the County:

- Beacon Manufacturing 850
- Square D 646
- BASF 510
- Rockwell International – 500

The following are various economic development issues and opportunities that are relevant today:

Agriculture - Loss of Agriculture

The loss of agricultural land is just as relevant today as it was in during the 1998 effort. According to the HUB Project, a coordinated effort by public, private and nonprofit participants to create sustainable economic development strategies for Buncombe County, farmland will continue to be consolidated throughout the County. Many agricultural lands are currently being developed for residential use throughout the County and we see this trend continuing into the future. The development of the Volunteer Agricultural Preservation Program has given options to local farm

IV. CURRENT ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

owners on how to best protect their property from development (see Undeveloped Land Map #11 for reference). In addition to the Volunteer Agricultural Preservation Program, the North Carolina Present Use Value Program helps agricultural land owners keep property tax levels at current agricultural rates rather than subjecting the land owners to a higher tax rates based on the current market value of their existing agricultural land. As previously mentioned in the 1998 Plan, there is a continuing need for aggregate farmland preservation efforts throughout the County if agriculture is to remain a viable component of the local economy.

Industrial - Loss of Industrial Development and Employment

According to the Asheville Metro Business Research Center, a service of the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, the area has experienced six straight years of losses in local manufacturing employment. The local manufacturing and industrial enterprises recently employed over 22,000 workers and contributed to approximately **\$885 million annually** in wages alone. This particular sector has a sizable impact on the local economy, but in recent years has not seen a gain in local job opportunities.

Industrial - Few Greenfield Sites Available

A continuing issue is to understand the appropriate amount of greenfield sites to set aside for future industrial development. The 1998 Plan called for land with all necessary infrastructures to be set aside to attract new employers. With suitable sites being converted to residential uses, there is little inventory to market to potential buyers.

Industrial – Regional Competition

Regional competition from adjacent counties and South Carolina are important factors in the lack of interest from manufacturing and industrial employers. Incentive packages offered by regional competitors are taking potential industrial clients away from Buncombe County. According to the Upstate Alliance of South Carolina, South Carolina's offers various performance-based tax incentives that reduce corporate income tax liability, offer a variety of sales tax and property tax exemptions and provide special case by case incentives to attract new businesses. In addition, the competition is stiffened by the competitors' ability to offer improved sites (with utilities and graded pads) at a per acre cost that is lower than what Buncombe County can offer for an unimproved sites.

Industrial - Few/No buyers (Market Driven)

Due to the recent decline in the industrial and manufacturing sectors over the past six years and regional competition, fewer large-scale employers are being attracted to the area. (Source: Asheville Metro Business Research Center)

Industrial - Underutilized Industrial Space

The 1998 Plan highlighted specific areas for future industrial development. These areas are still in need of employment. Industrial sites have been earmarked for brownfield redevelopment opportunities by the State, and may be suitable locations for housing new industries emerging in the area. Active eligible sites for the North Carolina Brownfield Program including sites within Buncombe County include the following:

Asheville Ice Plant
90 Riverside Drive
Asheville, Buncombe County

Fishburne Equipment
Airport road
Arden, Buncombe County

Asheville Industries
1829 Hendersonville Road

Historic Cotton Mill
191 Riverside Drive

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Arden, Buncombe County

Asheville Mica

75 Thompson Street
Asheville, Buncombe County

Asheville Waste Paper

304 Lyman Street
Asheville, Buncombe County

Elk Mountain Landfill

Woodfin, Buncombe County

Asheville, Buncombe County

Pond Road Landfill

79 Pond Road
Asheville, Buncombe County

Andrex Industries

Asheville, Buncombe County

**Carolina Production
Finishing**

Asheville, Buncombe County

Medical / Healthcare Growth

According to the 1998 Plan, there are 13 hospitals in the metro region. The largest concentrations of the health care facilities are located within Asheville. As Buncombe grows, additional health care facilities will need to be developed to keep up with an aging population and future demands. According to the Asheville Metro Business Research Center, a service of the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, over the last year, 3300 net new jobs have been added to the area.

Alternative Agriculture (Organic) and Horticulture Growth

Another relatively new opportunity in the region is the development of alternative agriculture industry, specifically organic and sustainable farming. Organic farming has been increasing over the past eight years throughout the Country and presents a variety of opportunities for farmers. Higher rates are generally paid for organic vegetables than regular vegetables produced from conventional farming practices that rely on various herbicides and pesticides. Horticulture is also a growing industry as an alternative to traditional farming. Providing adequate land for alternative agriculture is a current issue, but successful protection of agricultural lands may increase opportunities for enhancing Buncombe County's agricultural industry.

Tourism and Service Industry Growth

According to the Asheville Metro Business Research Center, a service of the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce "the well-established leisure & hospitality sector is positioned to advance the tourism market in the upcoming year." A new branding program focused on the key age 35-65 demographic segment, plus nearly \$10 million in direct media spending among the Tourism Development Authority, and area attractions/developments point to an upsurge in "buzz" for the Asheville area." This type of effort is fueling the already robust tourism and service industry. Additional jobs are being created in this sector and with this growth will come additional service industry opportunities.

Construction Growth

The recent residential housing boom has produced a nationwide increase in the construction industry as well as a localized increase in construction trade employment. Local residential development is the primary factor for increased employment in this sector construction trades. (Source: Asheville Metro Business Research Center)

Tech Service Growth

Buncombe County has the potential to position itself for attracting smaller technology-oriented business. These types of businesses generally provide high wage jobs and have lower floor area requirements as compared to traditional industrial and manufacturing businesses. This industry

IV. CURRENT ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

employs few personnel than traditional industry and manufacturing but flexibility in space requirements allow for many opportunities for integration into the existing building fabric.

Low Wage Jobs

An overarching issues associated with shifts in the local economy is the ability to attract employers that will create high wage jobs. Many of the service industries growing in Buncombe County offer low wage jobs and generate new business (i.e. support services) that also offer primarily low wage jobs. According to the Asheville Metro Business Research Center, a service of the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, local wage and income figures continue to lag the nation and state. The average wage is 29 percent below the national average and 15 percent below the state.

F. Communication

As growth in the county continues, a greater amount of information is demanded by the citizens. The County's website and the government access channel are two mechanisms used to disseminate such information. Community Clubs were among the key stakeholders who expressed an interest in improved communication by the County.

V. THE PLAN FRAMEWORK

A plan framework that recognizes the three alternatives noted in Section II emerged. The following provides a detailed explanation of the framework based on the combination of the three alternatives.

Economic Development

The primary focus of the 1998 plan was to strengthen economic development, reducing commercial and industrial sprawl, increasing the employment tax base, balancing growth, and protecting rural communities. Development alternatives were identified to help control the unlimited commercial and residential sprawl occurring throughout Buncombe County. Centers for commercial and industrial uses were identified to serve as hubs of concentrated development. This pattern would concentrate commercial and industrial activities in key locations, reinforcing existing and emerging commercial and industrial centers in a logical manner, thereby preserving land for development that would maximize value in these areas. In addition to commercial development, the County wanted to attract new industries to the local economy by promoting target locations for new industries and employing methods to protect these proposed locations from incompatible development.

Infrastructure

Building upon the economic development component, the County identified the need to plan for new industries and commercial activity in designated concentrated area that had adequate sewer and water service and access to major transportation corridors. The issue of locating future development near existing infrastructure was an integral way for the County to capitalize on already existing infrastructure opportunities. Additional sewer and water expansion issues were identified to better locate the best proposed sites for future economic development activity. Existing roadway capacity issues were also identified to facilitate improvements to transportation corridors adjacent to these proposed areas.

Environment

Concerned with the potential loss of the natural beauty of the area due to unmanaged growth and the creation of significant long-term effects on the social and economic conditions as well as features that contribute to the quality of life in the region, specific environmental issues were identified. Therefore, the primary focus of the environmental component of the plan was on retaining and enhancing environmental qualities. Preserving scenic quality, park and greenway expansion, land preservation, and environmental protection were among the specific plan recommendations. In addition to land preservation for environmental purposes, agricultural land was also a target for preservation, as it was identified as fragmented and intertwined with non-agricultural uses.

The Plan Framework emphasized efficient utilization and provision of infrastructure, sensitivity to environmental conditions, and economic development. While these three components, infrastructure, environment, and economy, continue to be the basis for the County's land use plan, infrastructure availability—sewer service, in particular—has emerged as a key concern, as it is a major driver of development patterns.

Realizing that a key characteristic of the appropriate areas for urbanization—or suburbanization—in the county is the presence of sewer service now and in the future. For this reason the County desires a stronger connection between the land use plan and sewer service area. Therefore, the framework must be modified to recognize the area that, in the future, has the greatest potential for sewer service and therefore has the greatest potential for more urban development. To determine the extent of the area to be reasonably served in the long term, the Planning Board examined alternatives that ranged in area from 33% of the county (the current Metropolitan Sewer District enlarged only to include sewered areas) to 47% of the county (a larger area that includes sub-basins that meet specific criteria). (See Potential MSD Expansion and Service Area Map in Implementation Strategies section.)

V. THE PLAN FRAMEWORK

By focusing development of varying densities in the sewerred areas, the County is more likely to steer development away from the environmentally sensitive areas identified in the 1998 Plan, thereby striking a balance between competing environmental and economic development objectives.

VI. UPDATED LAND USE CONCEPT & RECOMMENDATIONS

In the last eight years, development has continued in the county at an increasing rate, but the resulting pattern of development does not reflect the pattern recommended in the 1998 Plan. Corridors are being “stripped out,” or converting to commercial development in a linear pattern. Incrementally, parcels along the major and minor arterial roads are being carved out of much larger tracts to accommodate commercial uses, which in turn has increased the traffic and reduced the level of service on these roads, encouraged a more suburban sprawl pattern of development, and blurred the “lines” between communities erasing distinct edges that defined each place. Contrary to the 1998 Plan, hubs are not being reinforced through the concentration of development. Also, environmentally sensitive areas once thought to be too difficult to develop are now the target of many developers catering to the second home buyers.

With the rapid pace of development, the County requires a clearer land use vision to better convey the intent of the 1998 Plan. In keeping with the recommendations of the 1998 Plan and building on them, the County should consider a more detailed land use vision that communicates more specifically what types of development should be encouraged, where it should occur, and at what density.

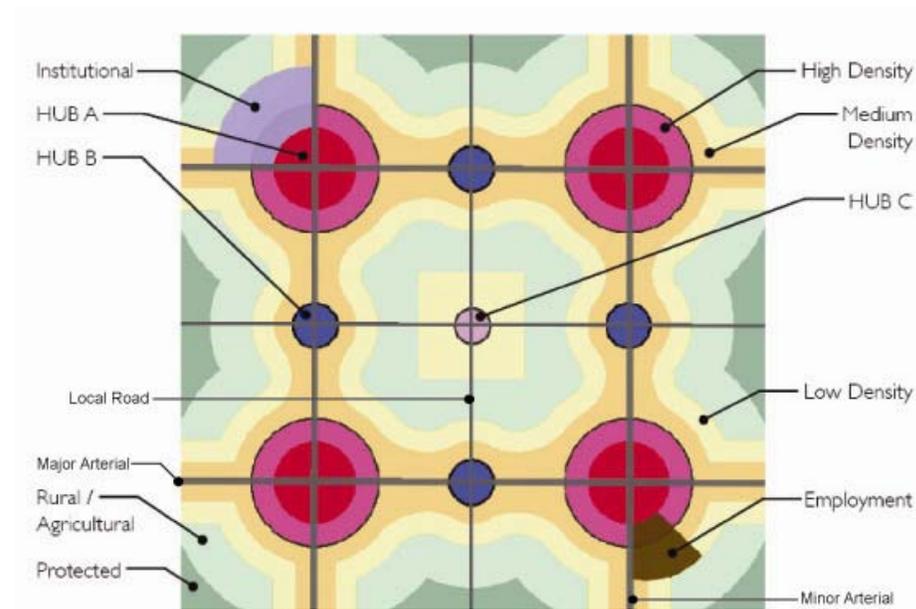


Figure 1 Land Use Diagram

The County should direct development to follow the recommended pattern conceptually illustrated in the land use diagram in Figure 1 and depicted on the Proposed Land Use Plan (see Map 10), which indicates a concentration of development in existing and emerging commercial centers. In concentrating development in these key locations, where infrastructure and services can be provided effectively and efficiently, surrounding areas can be preserved in a relatively rural state or developed at lower densities, thereby minimizing demand for infrastructure and services across a broad geographic area and reducing development pressure in areas not well suited for development. The land use areas represented in the diagram and on the land use plan vary in terms of types of land use, intensity (density), scale, and form. The typical conditions of the land use areas are as follows:

Hubs are existing and emerging commercial centers where development should be concentrated. However, over time, such development should include a mixture of uses. Those shown on the Proposed Land Use Plan are generally located where the hubs are shown on the 1998 Plan. New or shifted hubs are located in response to a change in the existing land use pattern that reflects more intense commercial development than the previous hub location, a change in the direction of development that suggests the potential for a center to meet the demand for services

VI. UPDATED LAND USE CONCEPT & RECOMMENDATIONS

from new development, or improved infrastructure that could support more intense development envisioned for the hubs.

Figure 2 illustrates the proposed hub locations in the context of existing commercial centers in or at the edges of Asheville and other municipalities.

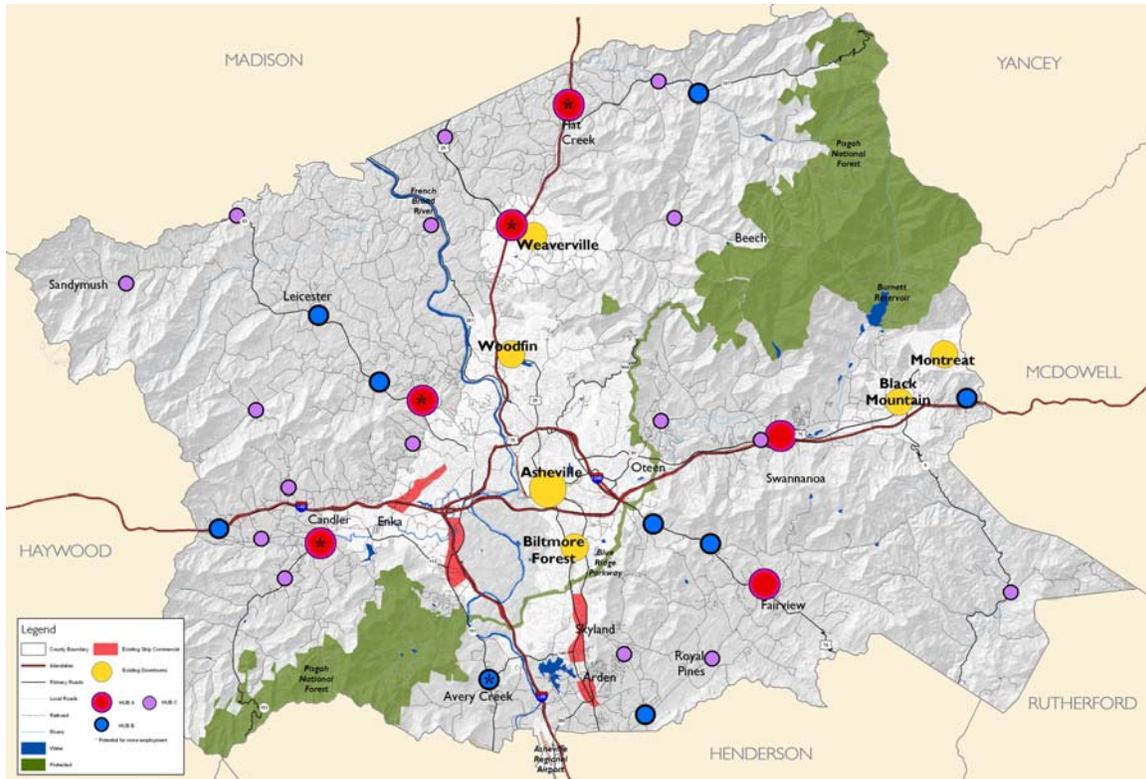


Figure 2 Hub Map

Hubs are intended to have the same general characteristics:

- within existing or potential future sewer service area (future Metropolitan Sewer District)
- close to or adjacent to
 - existing schools*
 - county parks*
 - existing utilities or future utility extension areas (or within)
 - roads that can adequately support traffic associated with hub development
- away from
 - steep slopes and floodplains
 - parcels in farmland preservation program
 - conservation easements

**Not all hubs.*

However, hubs will differ in scale and range of uses; therefore, three types of hubs have been shown on the land use plan to recognize the differences. Each type is described below.

Hub A

- Approx. 100-200 acres (gross), which is smaller than downtown Asheville and roughly equal in size to downtown Black Mountain (125 acres = a little more than ¼-mile area = 5-minute walk from center to edge, or 10-minute walk across)

VI. UPDATED LAND USE CONCEPT & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Mixed use area serving subregion (+/- 3-mile radius service area). This type of hub is comprised primarily of commercial uses at the core or center but should include residential uses of the highest density that the market will support in the county.
- At or near intersection of 2 major arterial roads
- May include/encompass larger, existing commercial centers: traditional town centers, strip centers
- Ideally, it is the location for larger institutional and employment uses (hospitals, colleges, high schools, etc.) and community facilities
- Buildings tallest in this area
- Vertical mixture of uses within buildings is common
- Multiple types of public spaces
- Strong connectivity for wide variety of modes. Transit stop location if/when transit serves this area of county. Street network forms block pattern (grid, modified grid)



Example of the scale of Hub A: Biltmore Park

Hub B

- Approx. 60-100 acres (gross)
- Mixed use area serving community (+/- 1-mile radius service area)
- At or near intersection of major arterial road and minor arterial road or collector road
- May include/encompass smaller, existing commercial: traditional town centers, strip centers
- Ideally, it is the location for larger institutional and employment uses and community facilities
- Building height may be limited to something lower than that permitted in Hub A
- Vertical and horizontal mixture of uses
- Organized around central public space (village green) with multiple spaces of varying forms and sizes (pocket parks, small plazas, courtyards) are integrated elsewhere in hub
- Strong connectivity for several modes. Street network forms block pattern (grid, modified grid)

VI. UPDATED LAND USE CONCEPT & RECOMMENDATIONS



Example of the scale of Hub B

Hub C

- Approx. 40-60 acres (gross)
- Mixed use (primarily commercial) serving neighborhood
- Rural crossroads area or center of “hamlet” (small village – Source: <http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/hamlet>)
- At or near intersection of 2 minor arterials or collector roads
- Building height may be limited to 2 stories
- Vertical mixture of uses can be found buildings, but horizontal mixture of uses more common
- Organized around central public space (small square)
- Strong connectivity, especially for pedestrian and vehicular modes. At a minimum, crossroads are complemented by internal circulation on commercial properties.



Example of the scale of Hub C

VI. UPDATED LAND USE CONCEPT & RECOMMENDATIONS

Employment should be associated with the hub types A and B or be in close proximity. Office and industrial uses often require the same road access that these two hub types also require. Also, the range of uses found in each of these hubs are likely to include the services needed to support the employment and could do so more adequately than outlying areas. The shift away from large-scale office and industrial development due to a lack of demand for such development has focused economic development efforts on accommodating employers in smaller spaces in mixed use environments. The technological services industry, for instance, has more flexible location criteria and can therefore be integrated into development and redevelopment occurring in the hubs.

Employment

- Office and industrial uses clustered in office, industrial, or business parks
- At the edge of or integrated into a portion of Hub A and possibly Hub B at a smaller scale; Hub A, the highest level hub, has the same kind of roadway access that the employment area would require. Also, Hub A is likely to have the services to support the employment area and the employment area would support the large-scale commercial development found in Hub A.
- Would have road frontage on at least one major arterial
- Typically 3-5 stories depending on context



Offices such as those shown here are appropriate for employment areas.

Surrounding the hubs, the pattern of development should shift to **high, medium, or low density** development with a narrower range of uses than the hubs. These areas will be primarily residential and will vary in density, transitioning from higher density near hubs to lower density further away from the hubs.

High Density

- Located within and surrounding Hub A and mixed with the commercial uses within Hub B
- Includes multi-family (condominiums, apartments), attached single family (townhouses), and small lot detached single family (patio homes, zero lot line lots)
- Building height limited to 4 stories (or height to complement or not to exceed the scale of Hub A buildings)
- Multiple green spaces of varying forms and sizes are integrated
- Strong connectivity, especially for pedestrian and vehicular modes; Streets connect to street network of adjacent hub and are complemented by internal circulation on commercial and multi-family properties

VI. UPDATED LAND USE CONCEPT & RECOMMENDATIONS



In addition to town houses and condominiums, homes on small lots are a likely component of the high density areas in the county of the future.

Medium Density

- Surrounding hubs, but lying further away than High Density
- Includes detached single family on medium sized lots
- Building height may be limited to 3 stories



Single Family Homes on half acre lots are and will continue to be part of the medium density development pattern.

Low Density

- Surrounding hubs, but lying further away than High or Medium Density
- Includes detached single family on large lots
- Building height may average 2 stories

VI. UPDATED LAND USE CONCEPT & RECOMMENDATIONS



Low Density areas will include residential development, typically single family homes on large lots.

The eastern portion of the county is the location of a few **major institutional** uses, including Warren Wilson College. These are unique, long-established entities are not likely to convert or redevelop into another use in the foreseeable future. These have been delineated in the plan to acknowledge their presence and scale.

Major Institutional

- Large-scale institutions that are unique in the county—and possibly the region—and occupy hundreds of acres of land, including Warren Wilson College, The Cove Camp (Billy Graham), and YMCA Blue Ridge Assembly



Warren Wilson College Campus

A high percentage (51%) of the county is currently rural as much of it is vacant land or in agricultural use. Many of the agricultural operations participate in the Farmland Preservation Program, indicating intent to continue this use into the future. In addition, some of the undeveloped areas are less likely than other areas to develop over time as they are comprised of parcels permanently protected by conservation easements and/or land that is constrained physically by steep slopes and floodplains. Many of these areas also lack the infrastructure needed to support development. This relatively undeveloped state has contributed to the scenic quality of the area; views of undeveloped ridgelines and hillsides, particularly above an elevation of 2500', are among the reasons people choose to visit or live in the county. These characteristics suggest that these areas should remain rural in the future. Depicted on the land use plan as **rural/agricultural** areas, agricultural and very low density residential uses should continue to be the predominant uses in these areas, if development occurs.

VI. UPDATED LAND USE CONCEPT & RECOMMENDATIONS

Rural/Agricultural

- Lowest density of the county's developed area
- Includes detached single family on very large ("estate") lots, agricultural land, and vacant/open land (i.e., conservation easements, preserves, etc.)
- Building height may be limited to 2 stories



Homes dotted across the otherwise rural landscape is a characteristic of the rural/agricultural areas.

Protected areas defined as areas that are not expected to develop because they are federally protected as federal parklands and forests encompass over 13% (50,000 acres) of the county. The area surrounding the Burnett Reservoir is a water supply watershed in single ownership and is also considered protected from development for the long term.

Protected

- Vacant, undeveloped state in which it will remain
 - Federally protected lands (Pisgah National Forest)
 - Burnett Reservoir water supply watershed



Undeveloped Land

VII. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

1. Expand the Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) and adopt sewer service extension policies that support the direction and pattern of development recommended in the land use plan. (Note: Future MSD boundary may include areas outside of Buncombe County. For the purposes of implementing this updated land use plan, only Buncombe County areas are considered in the development of the strategies set forth below.)

1.1. Expand MSD boundary to encompass a larger geographic area that includes drainage sub-basins* that, over the next twenty years, are likely to develop at a higher intensity than the surrounding areas. Map 11 depicts a proposed MSD boundary that includes sub-basins that meet seven or eight of the criteria listed below.

* *These sub-basins were created using ArchHydro tool in ArcGIS based on the most recent LIDAR data, and modified to acknowledge sub-basins delineated by MSD.*

Criteria:

- Drainage sub-basin should be considered for inclusion in an expanded MSD if the following criteria are met.
- 40% of area developed
- < 25% of area has steep topography (slopes 40% or greater), which also reflects soil suitability (County's fragile soils are in steep slope areas). Source: United States Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- < 25% of area protected (up to 75% or more could develop at an intensity that would benefit from sewer service)
- Existing road infrastructure (collector and local street network) is present
- 50% or more of the land area is within 2 miles of an existing or proposed "Hub" (or node where development is or should be concentrated) shown on land use plan
- 50% or more of the land area is within 2 miles of existing sewer lines
- Majority of the land area is below 2500' in elevation (maximum elevation without water storage facilities)
- Areas where septic systems are failing

1.2. Adopt a policy of extending sewer service in accordance with established priorities. Within this future boundary, the MSD should delineate service areas that reflect priorities for the future extension of sewer service. Map 11 also shows proposed service areas that the MSD should consider in delineating those areas. In addition to meeting criteria, the prioritization they suggest is consistent with the management of growth and the land development pattern recommended in Section VI. The proposed service areas definitions and proposed extension policies are described below.

Primary Service Area

The Primary Service Area is comprised of the area currently within the existing MSD boundary as well as the areas outside of the existing MSD that currently have sewer service. Portions of the existing MSD do not have sewer service at present, and as extensions are considered, these areas should take priority over areas outside of the Primary Service Area. Publicly- or privately-funded extensions should occur in accordance with the following:

- If privately funded, reimbursement may be available in accordance with the current MSD sewer extension policy.
- Lines shall be sized to serve potential future development in sub-basin.
- System must be dedicated to MSD.
- MSD or Buncombe County could use power of condemnation to acquire sewer easements across private property to accommodate gravity lines in order to avoid additional pump stations where appropriate.

Assumption: MSD has special assessment ability.

VII. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Secondary Service Area

The Secondary Service Area includes areas adjacent to the Primary Service Area and includes sub-basins that meet all eight criteria listed under 1.1 above. As extensions are considered, these areas should take priority over areas beyond the Primary and Secondary Service Area. Extensions into this area should be privately-funded and should occur in accordance with the following:

- No reimbursement available presently.
- Lines shall be sized to serve potential future development in sub-basin.
- System must be dedicated to MSD.
- MSD will not use power of condemnation for such private extensions.
- Area served may be subject to voluntary zoning or rezoning, if zoning is utilized in Buncombe County.

Tertiary Service Area

The Tertiary Service Area includes areas adjacent to the Primary and Secondary Service Areas and includes sub-basins that meet seven of the eight criteria listed under 1.1 above. This area represents the lowest priority for sewer service extension; Primary and Secondary Service Areas would take precedence when extensions are being considered. Like the Secondary Service Area, extensions into this area should be privately-funded and should occur in accordance with the following:

- No reimbursement available presently.
- Lines shall be sized to serve potential future development in sub-basin.
- System must be dedicated to MSD.
- MSD will not use power of condemnation for such private extensions.
- Area served may be subject to voluntary zoning or rezoning, if zoning is utilized in Buncombe County.

1.3. Adopt a policy of not extending sewer service beyond the proposed MSD boundary (encompasses primary, secondary, and tertiary areas shown on Map 11) except under unique circumstances that warrant an extension. Such circumstances shall be evaluated/reviewed by MSD Board of Directors and the local government(s) having jurisdiction over the new area to be served.

2. Adopt zoning for the county that coincides with the land use areas depicted on the Proposed Land Use Plan. See Map 12 for Proposed Zoning Concept.

2.1. Outside of the updated Primary Service Area, consider applying a mixed-use zoning district that regulates only those uses that are often necessary but typically considered undesirable because they are—or are perceived to be—incompatible with other land uses, and in some cases, have a negative impact on adjacent uses (i.e. noise). Such uses include those already regulated by individual County ordinances that are presently being enforced to minimize the negative impacts. Henderson County has a district similar to this; it may be used as a model in crafting the district for Buncombe County. (See Appendix C for a copy of Henderson County's Open Use District, which is similar to the type of district recommended.) Consider the following uses for inclusion in this district as a special use (permitted provided they meet conditions):

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| • Incinerators | • Slaughtering plants |
| • Solid waste management facilities | • Amusement parks |
| • Mining and extraction operations | • Chip mills |
| • Concrete plants | • Outdoor commercial shooting ranges |
| • Asphalt plants | • Multi-family structures over a specified size (size to be determined) |
| • Motor sports facilities | |

VII. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Prohibited uses may include the following:

- Hazardous waste disposal facilities, unless preempted pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 130A-293
- Radioactive Waste Disposal Facilities, unless preempted pursuant to N.C.G.S. §104E-6.2

2.2. The 1998 Plan identified the 2500' elevation as the threshold above which development density should be limited based on the steepness of slopes. This area tends to be the area where the steepest slopes (40% and over) are found, and with the dramatic change in elevation above this point, it is also highly visible. To protect the steep slopes and ridgelines in the county, establish two overlay districts that limit development in those sensitive areas. Though the standards of the underlying zoning districts would apply, properties in these areas would also be subject to standards of the overlay district in which they lie. Limitations would be placed on intensity of both residential and non-residential development. Consider standards that specifically address density: maximum dwelling units per acre for residential uses, maximum floor area ratio for non-residential uses, minimum lot size, and/or maximum building height. Potential names and locations of those overlay districts are as follows:

- Ridgeline/Hillside Protection Overlay District 1 (RHO-1) – This overlay district would apply to land that lies above the 2500' elevation.
- Ridgeline/Hillside Protection Overlay District 2 (RHO-2) – This overlay district would apply to land that lies above the 3000' elevation.

See Map 12 for the areas to which these overlay districts would apply.

2.3. Apply detailed zoning to the area that lies within the updated Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD) boundary that is the Primary Service Area (see #1 above).

- Initially, consider using the following types of districts, which reflect districts by the same name utilized in the Limestone Township. Densities could also be equal to the densities associated with the Limestone districts.
 - *Low density residential district (R-LD)*. The R-LD low density residential district is primarily intended to provide locations for low density residential and related type development in areas where topographic or other constraints preclude intense urban development. The minimum required lot area will be one acre.
 - *Single-family residential district (R-1)*. The R-1 single-family residential district is primarily intended to provide locations for single-family residential and supporting recreational, community service and educational uses. This district is further intended to protect existing single-family subdivisions from encroachment of incompatible land uses, and this does not allow mobile homes or mobile home parks.
 - *Residential district (R-2)*. The R-2 residential district is primarily intended to provide locations for residential development and supporting recreational, community service and educational uses. These areas will usually be adjacent to R-1 single-family residential districts, will provide suitable areas for residential subdivisions and in order to help maintain the present character of R-1 districts, will not allow mobile homes or mobile home parks. Higher density development, which includes multifamily residential units and planned unit development, may be allowed in this district only when both public water and sewer services are available.
 - *Residential district – mobile home (R-2 MH)*. The R-2 MH district is primarily intended to provide locations for the variety of residential and other issues permitted in the R-2 district including individual mobile homes, but will not allow mobile home parks.
 - *Residential district (R-3)*. The R-3 residential district is primarily intended to provide locations for a variety of residential development depending upon the availability of public water and sewer services. Some areas within the R-3 district will have no public water and sewer services available and

VII. IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

will thus be suitable primarily for single-family residential units and mobile homes on individual lots. Other areas within the district will have public water and/or sewer service available and will thus be suitable for higher density uses such as multifamily residential units, planned unit developments, and mobile home parks. The R-3 district also provides for various recreational, community service and educational uses that will complement the residential development.

- *Neighborhood service district (NS)*. The NS neighborhood service district is primarily intended to provide suitable locations for limited, neighborhood oriented, commercial, business, and service activities in close proximity to major residential neighborhoods. The NS district is designed to allow for a mix of residential, commercial, business and service uses in limited areas at key intersections leading to residential neighborhoods in order to provide such service to the residents of that particular neighborhood. As such the type of uses allowed and the standards established for development in this NS district should be compatible with the residential character of the area and should neither add to traffic congestion; cause obnoxious noise, dust, odors, fire hazards or lighting objectionable to surrounding residences; nor visually detract from overall appearance of the neighborhood.
- *Commercial service district (CS)*. The CS commercial service district is primarily intended to provide suitable locations for clustered commercial development to encourage the concentration of commercial activity in those specified areas with access to major traffic arteries, to discourage strip commercial development, and to allow for suitable noncommercial land uses.
- *Employment district (EMP)*. The EMP employment district is primarily intended to provide appropriately located sites for employment concentrations primarily for office type uses, industrial uses, storage and warehousing, and wholesale trade. This EMP district includes existing industrial and office areas and sites suited for future development in areas designated on the land use plan as employment centers. Only those manufacturing uses will be allowed which meet all local, state and federal environmental standards, and do not involve obnoxious noise, vibrations, smoke, gas, fumes, odor, dust, fire hazards, or other objectionable conditions which would be detrimental to the health, safety, and general welfare of the community. These areas will also include sites suitable for supportive activities such as community service, commercial services, and residential.
- Conduct a thorough evaluation of the Limestone Township zoning district standards to determine whether these districts and their standards are appropriate for achieving the proposed land use pattern or modifications are required. For example, the range of uses permitted in the residential districts may need to be expanded to include uses that complement residential uses.
- Consider the creation of additional zoning districts that more effectively achieve the intent of the land use areas. Examples of new districts may include the following:
 - *Mixed Use 1 (MU-1)*. The MU-1 mixed use district would enable the type of development envisioned for Hub A. The standards of this district are form-based, allowing a wide variety of uses to be mixed vertically (within a single building) and horizontally in multiple, adjacent buildings. This provides the greatest flexibility to respond to market conditions and concentrate residential, commercial, and employment uses in close proximity to maximize available infrastructure. In mapping the district, consider the following characteristics:
 1. Approx. 100-200 acres (gross), which is smaller than downtown Asheville and roughly equal in size to downtown Black Mountain

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- (125 acres = a little more than ¼-mile area = 5-minute walk from center to edge, or 10-minute walk across)
 - 2. Serving sub region of the county (+/- 3-mile radius service area)
 - 3. At or near intersection of 2 major arterial roads
 - 4. May include/encompass larger, existing commercial centers: traditional town centers, strip centers
 - 5. Ideally, it is the location for larger institutional and employment uses (hospitals, colleges, high schools, etc.) and community facilities
 - 6. Buildings height tallest in this area
 - 7. Vertical mixture of uses within buildings is common
 - 8. Multiple types of public spaces
 - 9. Strong connectivity for wide variety of modes. Transit stop location if/when transit serves this area of county. Street network forms block pattern (grid, modified grid).
 - *Mixed Use 2 (MU-2)*. The MU-1 mixed use district would enable the type of development envisioned for Hub B. The standards of this district are form-based, also allowing a wide variety of uses to be mixed vertically (within a single building) and horizontally in multiple, adjacent buildings. This district also provides the flexibility to respond to market conditions and concentrate residential, commercial, and employment uses in close proximity to maximize available infrastructure. However, the district is intended for a smaller area with a smaller scale than is envisioned for Hub A. In mapping the district, consider the following characteristics:
 - 1. Approx. 60-100 acres (gross)
 - 2. Serving community (+/- 1-mile radius service area)
 - 3. At or near intersection of major arterial road and minor arterial road or collector road
 - 4. May include/encompass smaller, existing commercial: traditional town centers, strip centers
 - 5. Ideally, it is the location for smaller institutional and employment uses and community facilities
 - 6. Building height limited to something lower than that permitted in hub type A
 - 7. Vertical and horizontal mixture of uses
 - 8. Organized around central public space (village green) with multiple spaces of varying forms and sizes (pocket parks, small plazas, courtyards) are integrated elsewhere in hub
 - 9. Strong connectivity for several modes. Street network forms block pattern (grid, modified grid).
 - *Agriculture (AGR)*. The AGR agricultural district may be applied to properties that are currently being used for agricultural purposes or are within an area that should be protected for future agricultural uses due to suitable physical conditions and/or proximity to existing agricultural properties.
 - *Major Institutional (INST)*. The INST major institutional district may be applied to properties that exceed 100 acres and are devoted solely to institutional uses, such as colleges and universities, and associated support uses that are operated or controlled by the institution.
- Consider the conversion of land use areas into one or more zoning districts as indicated in Table 1 provided below.

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Table 1 Proposed Zoning Conversion

AREA	PROPOSED ZONING DISTRICTS
Protected	R-LD*
Rural	R-LD*, Agriculture (AGR)
Low Density	R-1*
Medium Density	R-2*, R-2 MH*
Major Institutional	INST
Hub A	Mixed Use 1 (MU-1), CS*, R-3
Hub B	Mixed Use 2 (MU-2), CS*
Hub C	NS*
Employment	EMP*

** Proposed zoning district may be similar to Limestone Township zoning district by same name.*

Note 1. To avoid non-conforming uses, some properties may be zoned to reflect existing conditions using one of the following: PS (some uses, such as schools, could be permitted in districts listed in section above)*

3. In the absence of zoning, modify the Buncombe County Subdivision Ordinance to include hillside development standards. Standards should be aimed at minimizing the impact of new development by preserving trees and other vegetation that are critical to the protection of views and the stabilization of steep slopes, and reducing the amount of stormwater runoff—and the effects of it—from development. This may be achieved by limiting the amount of disturbed area and impervious area on each site and by increasing the minimum lot size on very steep slopes.
4. Conduct a visual impact analysis to identify areas where the preservation of views is critical for maintaining economic health of the region and therefore should be protected. Establish criteria for prioritizing the areas, and map each in a manner that reflects that prioritization. The maps could then be used in educating landowners and developers that control properties in these areas and encouraging them to minimize visual impacts of development. This educational effort should emphasize the following: lower building heights and overall size, low density, and larger lot sizes with minimal disturbance to the vegetation (i.e. tree clearing).
- 5A. Key to the success of the hubs is a mixture of uses that include civic uses and other community facilities. Parks, schools, and libraries are examples of such uses that would be ideally suited for these hubs. Attract development to the “hubs” by locating community facilities within them. These facilities may act as catalysts for development and redevelopment.
- 5B. Coordinate with other County departments and agencies to ensure long range plans of each acknowledge the County’s land use plan. Examples of the types of such plans include:
 - MPO 2030 Transportation Plan
 - Schools - Facilities Master Plan
6. Study options to maintain or improve water quality.
 - Strengthen Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance as needed
 - Create and adopt a stormwater management ordinance that meets or exceeds North Carolina standards as needed to better address issues in the county.
 - Reduce impervious areas to minimize run-off and flooding
 - Encourage use of BMP’s and Low Impact Development (LID)
 - Better control velocity and volume of water released.

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- 7A. Consider adjusting well location regulations to minimize well density in areas where the volume of groundwater is low, thereby encouraging commercial and some residential development to be located where municipal water is available. In addition, consider lowering the number of units that can be served by a single, private well to minimize private wells as an option in developments that, due to the intensity of the use, should be acquiring water from the municipality. Presently, developers can serve up to 25 persons or have up to 15 connections (Health Department assumes 3 persons per household which equates to roughly 8 residential units) with a single well; they avoid having to design and permit a community water system by installing multiple individual private wells to serve a development.
- 7B. Due to the uncertainty of the future of water service, consider establishing an independent authority that can provide water service to areas of the County not currently served by the City of Asheville.
8. Consider revising septic requirements that allow developers to avoid the more stringent DENR review for permits for developments that generate wastewater flows in excess of 3000 GPD. Many large commercial developments, restaurants, apartments, etc. avoid this by breaking up their wastewater flows and directing them to smaller, individual fields. Preventing this breaking up of flows would encourage growth and facilitate sewer extensions within the defined growth areas. In addition, it may minimize future subsurface septic issues.
9. Investigate the possibility of using Project Development Financing, North Carolina's form of Tax Increment Financing (TIF), to spur economic development activity in certain areas that are ripe for redevelopment. In doing so, be selective to ensure competitiveness of the site or area relative to other potential projects in the state that are pursuing this same funding source.
10. Study and evaluate options for shifting the cost of providing infrastructure and services to serve new development to developers, including but not limited to the options listed below.
- Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) - Investigate the option of developing and adopting an APFO in order to understand the impact(s) of new development on infrastructure for which the county is responsible (i.e. schools, parks, public safety, etc.). This is often considered a form of impact fees, but is a tool that can be legally used in NC for achieving a similar end result: development pays its way. Be certain the benefits outweigh the costs, as it may also increase the cost of housing units thereby reducing the percent of available housing in Buncombe County that may be considered affordable in the future.
 - Fees-in-lieu – Collect fees-in-lieu from developers as means to fund infrastructure improvements and services (i.e., schools and fire service) needed to serve new development, particularly when the timing of the improvement(s), if otherwise provided by the developer, would interfere with the logical phasing of a larger improvement project undertaken by the County.
11. Seek opportunities to establish a land transfer tax to generate revenues that could be used by the County for land acquisition. These state and local tax values are assessed on the property at the time of the transfer and generally used to preserve open spaces in rapidly growing areas. This may be an effective tool for increasing the county's participation in the establishment of conservation easements.
12. Develop a Park and Recreation Master Plan. Through the process of developing this type of plan, the County can identify more specifically countywide needs for open space as well as passive and active recreation, determine the appropriate size and forms of each component of the park and recreation system (i.e. small and large parks, greenways, etc.), identify priority projects, and define funding mechanisms to implement the plan.

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13. Study and evaluate options for sharing the burden of providing open space and recreational areas with private developers. For example, consider adding open space regulations to the County's Subdivision Ordinance. In addition to setting aside a percentage of a site for open space purposes, developers should also be required to make accessible a portion the open space and improve it for use by the community in which it lies, and configure it in a manner that establishes it as an integral component of the development. Be certain the requirements are reasonable, as they may increase the cost of housing units thereby reducing the percent of available housing in Buncombe County that may be considered affordable in the future.
14. Allow a cluster development option as a means to promote compact development while preserving open space, particularly in areas where the physical conditions of the site (i.e., steep slopes) warrant a concentration of development in a portion of the site. Offer a density bonus as an incentive to developers to utilize this option.
15. Create economic development incentives to encourage industrial and other major employers to locate in Buncombe County. Provide incentives that encourage the recycling of existing industrial sites.
16. Participate in and/or promote programs to maximize other opportunities for economic development in the County.
 - a. To maintain or increase tourism as a component of the local economy, investigate the benefits of the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area (BRNHA) Program was instituted in 2003 to preserve and promote the cultural landscape of the Blue Ridge region that creates and defines the experience of that area. A national heritage area is identified by the United States Congress that is rich in cultural, natural, historic, and recreational resources and together forms a "distinctive landscape". On Nov 10, 2003 the United States Congress declared a 25 County (over 10,000 sq mi) region in western North Carolina as Blue Ridge National Heritage Area. The program offers matching grants - \$10 million available for heritage plans - to support and promote innovative projects across the region that sustain and encourage the heritage of this region.
 - b. Blue Ridge Entrepreneurial Council (BREC) is an initiative of Advantage West that helps the entrepreneurs through its four focus areas – education, mentoring and networking, communications, and capital formation through its Blue Ridge Angel Investor Network (BRAIN). This initiative also helps local entrepreneurs become more aware of grants, funding, and partnerships with the universities and attracts new sources of capital to the region.
 - c. Raise awareness of the existing Small Business Services Center and Incubator at the Enka Campus of Asheville-Buncombe Technical College to develop and promote value added businesses thereby sustaining agriculture as a component of the local economy.
 - d. Establish "Community Supported Agriculture" as a way to support and promote agricultural assets so agriculture may become a more stable component of the local economy, thereby helping farmland preservation. CSA is a concept of a partnership between consumers wanting 'safe food' and farmers needing a 'stable market'. This partnership facilitates the bridging of gap between producers and consumers by providing guaranteed buyers for agricultural products and guaranteed access to fresh food for consumers. The concept has gained momentum in United States since mid-1980s and has particularly thrived well in agriculture communities near prevailing urban centers.

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17. Continue the voluntary Farmland Preservation Program administered by the County Soil and Water Conservation Department, and encourage the following improvements:
 - a. Scoring system needs to reflect the goals of the plan (i.e. environmental preservation)
 - b. Adjust point system to allocate more points to larger tracts of land. Currently, up to 100 points can be earned for tracts of 100 acres in size or greater. Therefore, a 200-acre site would receive the same number of points as a tract half its size, which is contradictory to preservation goals. Reward larger tracts by allocating more points and eliminate the maximum.
 - c. Utilize the French Broad Training Center to educate landowners, concerned citizens and public officials about farmland preservation and agricultural conservation easements.
 - d. Consider new ways to earn points based on recent changes in agricultural activities (i.e., environmentally sensitive practices, such as those associated with organic farming, are employed).
18. Establish a short-term tax deferral program for large parcel owners of prime agricultural and/or natural lands. This property tax incentive would be awarded to program participants who elect to temporarily keep their land in an undeveloped state for a predetermined number of years. Special legislation may be required; this program would be subject to approval by the NC Legislature.
19. Continue and seek ways to improve/expand the Conservation Agreement Program. Offer educational programs to inform the public of the benefits, and utilize the French Broad Training Center to educate landowners, concerned citizens and public officials about conservation easements.
20. Create incentives for developers to provide a certain amount of workforce housing in new development. A density bonus, for example, may encourage developers to incorporate units that may be sold below market rate value without negatively affecting the profitability of the development project. Other incentives for developers could include a waiver of various permit fees and priority given to capital improvements that would serve that development.
21. Use County's website as means to better communicate with the County residents, builders, developers, business owners and others affected by growth and development in the community. This is an excellent tool for disseminating information and receiving feedback on specific topics. Consider conducting a short survey to determine how best to improve web-related communication techniques.
22. Continue the use of the government access channel as a means of raising awareness of current issues regarding growth and development in the county.
23. When appropriate, appoint a task force and/or organize meetings to make ensure that critical information and County decisions are communicated to appropriate/affected groups, and to get feedback from individuals who are knowledgeable about the topic(s).
24. Increase County staff resources. An evaluation of current staff resources is required to determine needs for additional staff to sufficiently follow through with implementation activities, administer existing and future ordinances, etc.
25. Establish methods for regular intergovernmental coordination and communication. Many development-related activities having an impact on the future of Buncombe County are happening outside of the County's jurisdiction. However, it is possible that many of the neighboring jurisdictions share similar concerns and ideas. The County can help facilitate the coordination and communication in the region needed to achieve common goals by defining

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an avenue for coordination and communication to occur. In addition to the regular meetings of planners in the region, consider establishing regular meetings of elected and appointed officials interested in coordination and communication. A model for this is the Elected Officials Forum held quarterly in Gaston County. Such meetings may be used to bring forward concerns so that solutions can be discussed and later implemented consistently at the local level.

APPENDIX A. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As a consultant to the County, LandDesign worked with County Staff to prepare this update to the 1998 Comprehensive Plan. The Update could not have been completed without the Planning Board's commitment to the process and the guidance the members provided. The Planning Board's input was especially critical in clarifying the issues to be addressed in the update, and giving feedback on ideas presented. Key stakeholders were assembled to confirm and expand on the issues. The participation of all the individuals involved is greatly appreciated.

PLANNING BOARD

Bill Newman, Chairman
Roy Chapman, Vice Chairman
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Community Clubs

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Jerome Hay	Big Ivy
Dave Mc Mahon	Buckeye Cove
Neil Carter	Cane Creek
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APPENDIX A. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Environmental

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John Ager	Hickory Nut Gap Farms
George Briggs	NC Arboretum

Business

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Janice Brummit	Arbys Restaurant
Buzzy Canady	H&M Constructors
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Albert Sneed	VanWinkle Law Firm
Martin Lewis	Lewis Real Estate
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Wanda Greene	Buncombe County Manager
Mike Morgan	Town of Weaverville
Jason Young	Town of Woodfin
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Joe McKinney	Land Of Sky Regional Council
David Brigman	WNC Air Quality
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Bruce Goforth	General Assembly Representative
Wilma Sherrill	General Assembly Representative

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Herman Turk	Renaissance Hotel
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John Winkenwerder	Hampton Inn

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Lavoy Spooner	BellSouth
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APPENDIX B. SUMMARY OF LAND USE PLAN STATUS REPORT (ADOPTED MARCH 1999)

The Comprehensive Land Use Plan recommends policies for growth that will protect natural and cultural resources of the county, and it recommends methods for improving the economic health of the county and the region.

Recommendation	Status	Method
Encourage design standards which limit driveway access, curb cuts, median crossings	Done	Metro Planning Organization (MPO) has asked DOT to do limited access with medians in all major corridors
Reduce traffic congestion by utilizing frontage roads or cross-parcel road connections	Pending	Have asked Planning Board to look into this
Direct development growth by addressing existing and new state road development	Ongoing	County is working with DOT on this. Ex. Widening of Sardis Road, new exit off of Dogwood Rd.
Direct water and sewer service toward areas of high environmental impact	Not yet	
Identify funding strategies for future expansions	Ongoing	Received Advantage West grant and currently working with Madison County to start process
Support regional approach	Ongoing	Received a \$66,000 grant and completed study of water and sewer needs in Buncombe, Henderson, Madison
Concentrate future development along existing sewer lines	Ongoing	This is currently happening
Prioritize water and sewer expansions to support the LUP	Ongoing	Have worked with MSD and their master plan
Establish Park and Ride lots	Pending	Working with MPO. A letter was sent requesting MPO look at funding sources for this
Encourage alternative forms of transportation	Pending	Mountain Mobility is working with Asheville transit and the Asheville/Black Mountain route
Plan future recreational facilities around school sites	Ongoing	Owen, Erwin, Hominy and Fairview pools are located at schools. Soccer and baseball fields at Roberson and Fairview
Balance availability of recreational facilities by existing school sites	Ongoing	Currently working on this. New facilities at Fairview, Enka, N. Buncombe. Erwin is in future plan for new facility
Identify funding strategies for future recreational facilities	Pending	Seeking \$500,000 state grant and some private/public partnerships such as BASF soccer complex
Develop public and private partnerships for expansion and development of recreational facilities	Pending	Seeking \$500,000 state grant and some private/public partnerships such as BASF soccer complex
Establish regionalized economic development approach to water/sewer lines	Ongoing	Received Advantage West grant and currently working with Madison County to start process
Coordinate industrial development with other counties resulting in shared tax /revenue base	Ongoing	Had talks with Henderson County. Some industrial clients are shared now
Density limits based on slope/elevation	Pending	Planning Board looking at changes for the subdivision ordinance. Also, working with Soil and Water Conservation Board
Limit public water and sewer to elevations no greater than 2,500 ft and 40% slope	Pending	Commissioners have asked MSD and Water Authority to make changes
Strengthen design standards of Manufacture Housing Ordinance (MHP)	Done	Density changes have been made
Decrease existing density requirements for MHPs with septic and wells	Done	Density changes have been made
Require townships establishing zoning to make provision for mobile homes or other permanent affordable housing	No	No zoning has happened
In mixed use areas, encourage/provide incentives for establishment of reasonable/logical buffering through permitting and existing ordinances	No	Can't do without zoning regulations
Encourage voluntary buffering along stream and river corridors	Ongoing	River Friendly program educates farmer on buffer benefits. Soil and Water Conservation distributes buffer kits
Emphasize benefits of water resource protection for natural wildlife	Ongoing	Soil and Water has education program
Aggressively enforce regulations prohibiting straight piping and improper discharge	Ongoing	Health Center has program funded through NC
In cooperation with Farmland Preservation Program and Soil and Water Conservation District, create Rural Lands Preservation Trust	Pending	Started program and seeking \$1 million grant for funding
Establish ongoing funding plan for purchases by the Trust	Pending	Seeking \$1 million grant
Limit new or additional utility taps where feasible on prime farmlands	Not yet	Have not done this
In Owen and Reynolds districts, provide parkway viewshed protection through the voluntary conveyance and purchase of scenic easements	Pending	Working with Parkway, which will inventory all viewsheds in Buncombe County this summer
Waive water/sewer impact fees for affordable housing that meets specific criteria	Pending	Landfill fees currently waived

APPENDIX B. SUMMARY OF LAND USE PLAN STATUS REPORT (ADOPTED MARCH 1999)

Develop incentives and standards for quality industrial siting which can include waiving impact fees and MSD charges	Ongoing	County has industrial incentive program. Have not needed to waive impact fees
Set aside adequate land with all necessary infrastructure for new employers	Not yet	This is a budget issue
Develop financial incentives that allow the direction of heavy industries to areas of heavy industrial use	Not yet	Have not had to look at financial incentives for heavy industries
Provide for incentives that encourage the recycling of existing industrial sites	Not yet	Looking for Brownfield's program money to recycle industrial sites with environmental problems
Urge schools to follow LUP in siting of future facilities and tie such adherence to County budget funding requests	Ongoing	
Use incentives to accomplish greenbelts, rural protection areas and viewsheds	Pending	Farmland preservation is working on a program
Develop a mechanism to fund and purchase or accept transfers of conservation easements	Done	Have one in place
Create limited zoning regulation for specifically identified areas to protect industrial properties	Not yet	There has been no additional zoning
Focus commercial development toward hubs, not toward extensive strip development along connectors and corridors	Not yet	Can only do through water and sewer extensions. Zoning is best tool to accomplish this.

§ 200-32.1. OU Open Use District. [Added 5-16-2001]

The OU District is established as a district in which all uses (excluding hazardous waste disposal facilities and radioactive waste disposal facilities and adult establishments) are allowed but certain uses are regulated so as to ensure that neighborhood impact is mitigated. The neighborhood impact from the uses listed below will be mitigated through the use of minimum specific site standards combined with general standards which provide the flexibility to impose a higher level of specific site standards dependent upon the degree of neighborhood impact.

- A. Definitions. The following definitions are applicable in this § 200-32.1 and in other sections of this chapter as specifically stated in such other sections:
1. ACCESS ROAD CORRIDOR -- A private passageway containing a road, street, driveway, etc., that provides the principal means of direct vehicular entry and/or exit between a regulated use and a paved, public road, street or highway. An access road corridor shall be located entirely on the subject property or on an easement appurtenant. An access road corridor shall contain a clear and unobstructed travelway, except for any necessary security gates, and shall have a minimum vertical clearance of a least 13 feet, six inches.
 2. BUFFER -- A continuous strip of land, measured from the property lines or from any street bordering or traversing the property (whichever is closer to the principal use or building), in which no development or principal use may occur, but which may contain screening, fencing, interior service roads not intended for patron use, principal use signs, business signs and gate or security houses. Access road corridors may cross the buffer at entrance and exit points only.
 3. EXTREMELY HAZARDOUS FACILITY -- Any industrial facility that stores, handles, processes or manufactures any material, substance or product that is considered to be a Class 1 explosive; a Class 2, Division 2.3 gas (gases toxic by inhalation); a Class 6 toxic material or infectious substance; or a Class 7 radioactive substance or material, all as classified by the United States Department of Transportation Hazard Classification System.
 4. EXTREMELY HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCE -- Any material, substance or product that is considered to be a Class 1 explosive; a Class 2, Division 2.3 gas (gases toxic by inhalation); a Class 6 toxic material or infectious substance; or a Class 7 radioactive substance or material, all as classified by the United States Department of Transportation Hazard Classification System.
 5. HEAVY INDUSTRY -- Any industrial use establishment that is an extremely hazardous facility as defined in § 200-32.1A of this chapter, or is a large quantity generator of hazardous waste as that term is defined by the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Specifically excluded from this definition are those establishments that are not extremely hazardous facilities that operate in an enclosed building(s) or structure(s) having a total gross floor area of less than 30,000 square feet; and those uses listed in § 200-32.1F(1) through (10).
 6. SETBACK -- A continuous strip of land, measured from the property lines or from any street bordering or traversing the property (whichever is closer to the principal use or building) in which no principal use is permitted. Limited development, including buffers and related development, parking lots and accessory structures and buildings, access road corridors, and interior service roads, may occur within the setback.
- B. Uses allowed by right. Unless otherwise stated hereinbelow:
1. All uses are allowed by right in the Open Use District;
 2. No zoning permit shall be required for uses allowed by right in the Open Use District;
 3. Accessory structures and buildings of all uses allowed by right in the Open Use District are exempted from those regulations contained in § 200-46.

APPENDIX C. HENDERSON COUNTY OPEN USE DISTRICT

- C. Uses governed by other ordinances. Within the OU District the following uses will be allowed but will be entirely governed by the specified ordinances adopted by the Henderson County Board of Commissioners:
1. Manufactured home parks: subject to compliance with Chapter 114 of the Henderson County Code, as may be amended.
 2. Communication towers: subject to compliance with Chapter 81 of the Henderson County Code, as may be amended.
- D. Uses permitted with standards.
1. The following uses shall be permitted with standards:
 - a. Vehicle graveyards (See § 200-38.2).
 - b. Mobile/manufactured home graveyards (See § 200-38.2).
 2. Uses permitted with standards shall require a zoning permit from the Zoning Administrator.
- E. (Reserved)
- F. Special uses.
1. The following special uses shall be permitted in the Open Use District, subject to the Board of County Commissioners finding that both the general site standards stated in § 200-56 and those specific site standards listed in § 200-38.2, if any, will be met:
 - a. Incinerators.
 - b. Solid waste management facilities.
 - c. Mining and extraction operations.
 - d. Concrete plants.
 - e. Asphalt plants.
 - f. Junkyards.
 - g. Motor sports facilities.
 - h. Slaughtering plants.
 - i. Amusement parks.
 - j. Chip mills.
 - k. Heavy industry.
 2. It is expressly acknowledged that the above-referenced uses will not adversely affect the health or safety of persons residing or working in the neighborhood of the proposed use and will not be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property or public improvements in the neighborhood as long as the site standards as specified in § 200-38.2 and the general site standards as specified in § 200-56D are met.
- G. Prohibited uses. The following uses shall be prohibited in the Open Use District:
1. Hazardous waste disposal facilities, unless preempted pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 130A-293.
 2. Radioactive Waste Disposal Facilities, unless preempted pursuant to N.C.G.S. § 104E-6.2.
 3. Adult establishments.
- H. Expansion and alteration of certain uses in the Open Use District. [Amended 8-15-2001]
1. Uses having a special use permit. The following requirements apply to those uses listed in § 200-32.1F which receive a special use permit after the effective date of a Zoning Map amendment applying the Open Use District in the applicable area:
 - a. Alteration of a use (without physical expansion). Alterations of the operations of a use shall be allowed as long as such alterations do not violate any specific standards of this chapter (see § 200-38.2), general standards of this chapter (see § 200-56) or conditions of the special use permit. If an alteration would result in the violation of any specific standards of this chapter (see § 200-38.2), general standards of this chapter (see § 200-56) or conditions of the special use permit, an amendment to the special use permit shall be required, otherwise such alteration will be deemed a violation of this chapter. This subsection shall not be deemed to allow a use to change to another use listed in § 200-32.1F without applying for a new special use permit. Alterations of operations shall include, but

- not be limited to, increases in productivity arising from the addition of equipment, the addition of employee shifts or the change of means and methods.
- b. Physical expansion of a use. A use may expand its facilities without any additional restrictions and without securing an amendment to the special use permit if the specific standards of this chapter (see § 200-38.2), general standards of this chapter (see § 200-56), or the conditions of the permit, if any, will not be violated and if the total size of the structures or areas devoted to the principal uses after the proposed expansion would not be increased by more than 10%. Notwithstanding the foregoing, no use may expand in accordance with the terms of this exception on more than two occasions without securing an amendment to the special use permit. All other expansions will require an amendment to the special use permit. If any condition of the special use permit will be violated by a proposed expansion to facilities, or such proposed expansion will result in more than two expansions to facilities pursuant to the exception contained hereinabove, or such expansion results in the total size of the structures or areas devoted to the principal use being expanded by more than 10%, then such expansion will be deemed a violation of this chapter.
2. Uses for which a special use permit was not required when established. For those uses of the same type as those listed in § 200-32.1F constructed or established after the effective date of a Zoning Map amendment applying the Open Use District in the applicable area, which did not require a special use permit when the use was constructed or established, any expansion or alteration to the operations, or any expansion or alteration to the structures or areas devoted to the principal use, which bring the use within the definition for those uses listed in § 200-32.1F shall require a special use permit. The entire use, including but not limited to the expansion or alteration, shall be required to comply with all applicable standards in the Open Use District.
 3. Preexisting uses. For those uses of the same type as those listed in § 200-32.1F constructed or established before the effective date of a Zoning Map amendment applying the Open Use District in the applicable area the following requirements shall apply:
 - a. Alteration of a use (without physical expansion). Alterations of the operations of a use of the type listed in § 200-32.1F shall be allowed without a special use permit if the use did not meet the definition of one of the uses listed in § 200-32.1F when constructed or established, and such alteration does not bring the use within the definition for one of the uses listed in § 200-32.1F. If, however, such alteration will bring the use within the definition of one of the uses listed in § 200-32.1F, then a special use permit shall be required. Once a special use permit is obtained for a preexisting use, however, further alterations shall be governed by § 200-32.1H(1)(a) above.
 - b. Physical expansion of a use. Expansions of the facilities for uses of the type listed in § 200-32.1F shall be allowed without a special use permit if the use would not have met the definition of one of the uses listed in § 200-32.1F when constructed or established, and such expansion does not bring the use within the definition for one of the uses listed in § 200-32.1F. If, however, such expansion will bring the use within the definition of one of the uses listed in § 200-32.1F or the use would have met the definition of one of the uses listed in § 200-32.1F when constructed or established, then a special use permit shall be required. Once a special use is obtained for a preexisting use, however, further expansions shall be governed by § 200-32.1H(1)(b) above.
 - c. Applicable standards. Notwithstanding any provisions of this chapter, alterations or expansions to uses required to obtain a special use permit pursuant to this § 200-32.1H(3) [whether or not they are later governed by § 200-32.1H(1)(a) or § 200-32.1H(1)(b) above] shall be required to meet the specific site standards listed in § 200-38.2 to the extent possible for the expanded or altered portion of

the facility or operation only. Any such alteration or expansion shall be required to meet the general standards listed in § 200-56 with or without conditions imposed by the Board of Commissioners as allowed by this chapter. Such conditions may include, but not be limited to, imposition of specific site standards of the types listed in § 200-38.2. Notwithstanding anything herein to the contrary, development occurring around a preexisting use will not affect the ability of such use to alter or expand its facilities or operations.

- I. Subsequent events. Events occurring subsequent to the date of an application for a special use permit for those uses in the OU District requiring such permit, including but not limited to the location of a health-care facility or school within the stated separation or a change in the residential density, shall not operate to invalidate the permit or affect the ability of the use to alter or expand its facilities or operations. In addition, development occurring around a preexisting use or a use for which a special use permit was not required when established will not affect the ability of such use to alter or expand its facilities or operations. [Amended 8-15-2001]

APPENDIX D. ISSUES MATRIX

2006 Issues & Opportunities	1998 Issues	Zoning	MSD (Existing & Future) Sewer Extension Policies	Well Location Regulations	Septic Location Regulations	Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance	Land Transfer Tax	Fees-in-lieu	Cluster Development Option (w/ Density Bonus)	Design Guidelines	Project Development Option (w/ Density Bonus)	Park and Recreation Financing	Economic Development Master Plan	Blue Ridge National Incentives	Blue Ridge National Heritage Area (BRNHA) Program	"Value Added" Businesses	"Community Supported Agriculture"	Hillside Development Standards	Conservation Preservation Program	Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Program	Community Facilities As A Catalyst	Visual Impact Analysis	Open space regulations in Subdivision Ordinance	County Website	Government Access Channel	County Staff Resources	Stormwater Management	Land Acquisition by County	School Facility Master Plan	MPO Transportation 2030 Plan	Intergovernmental Cooperation / Communication
ENVIRONMENT																															
Development on Steep Slopes/Ridgelines - views	x	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓								✓				✓	✓									✓
Development on Steep Slopes/Ridgelines - instability/erosion		✓	✓	✓													✓									✓	✓				
Hazard Areas (landslides)		✓															✓									✓	✓				
Water quality (erosion control, stream buffers, etc.)	x		✓	✓	✓			✓									✓					✓				✓					✓
Flooding		✓						✓														✓				✓	✓				
Open space preservation - Desire for more green space protection	x	✓						✓	✓			✓	✓									✓					✓				
Open space preservation - Conservation easements - more needed	x							✓								✓	✓									✓					
Open space preservation - Conservation easements - more education needed																✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓						✓

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2006 Issues & Opportunities	1998 Issues	Zoning	MSD (Existing & Future)	Sewer Extension Policies	Well Location Regulations	Septic Location Regulations	Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance	Land Transfer Tax	Fees-in-lieu	Cluster Development	Development Option (w/ Density Bonus)	Design Guidelines	Project Development	Park and Recreation Financing	Economic Development Master Plan	Blue Ridge National Incentives	Blue Ridge National Heritage Area (BRNHA) Program	"Value Added" Businesses	"Community Supported Agriculture"	Hillside Development Standards	Farmland Preservation Program	Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Ordinance	Community Facilities As A Catalyst	Visual Impact Analysis	Open space regulations in Subdivision Ordinance	County Website	Government Access Channel	County Staff Resources	Stormwater Management	Land Acquisition by County	School Facility Master Plan	MPO Transportation 2030 Plan	Intergovernmental Cooperation / Communication		
		Sewer - have capacity		✓																															
Sewer - MSD expansion?		✓																																	
Sewer - improvements to existing system	x	✓					✓																												
Septic - failures in environmentally sensitive areas	x	✓		✓																															
Power - overserving some areas (residential once designated for industrial)																																		✓	
Schools - 2 systems						✓																													
Schools - demand, site location	x				✓		✓																					✓		✓					
Parks / greenways - desire for more parks and greenways (system)	x	✓			✓		✓				✓													✓				✓		✓					
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT																																			
Agriculture - loss of agriculture	x													✓	✓		✓	✓																	
Industrial - loss of industrial development - loss of employment													✓		✓								✓												

